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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, AUGUST 23, 2007

In Today's Papers

CHP-MHP War of Words over Gul's Presidential Drive

All papers report the opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal accused the extreme-nationalist MHP of paving the way for Abdullah Gul to become president. Baykal criticized the MHP's participation in the presidential election in parliament, prompting the MHP to respond by criticizing the CHP for not taking part in the voting. "The CHP has begun to oppose the opposition as well; the party is placing its hopes on forces outside democracy," MHP Secretary-General Cihan Pacaci said.

Meanwhile, the left-leaning opposition DSP called on the CHP to support its candidate, Tayfun Icli, in the remaining rounds of the presidential race since the two candidates receiving most votes would compete in the third round slated for August 28.

Anti-Defamation League Adopts Armenian Genocide Claims

All papers report the US-based Anti-Defamation League (ADL) released a statement Tuesday saying Turkey's actions against Armenians during World War I years "were tantamount to genocide." ADL National Director Abraham Foxman said "We have never negated, but have always described the painful events of 1915-1918 perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians as massacres and atrocities."

Papers report Turkish sources said the shift in the ADL stance could negatively impact Turkey's close relationship with Israel. Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) said in a statement yesterday, "The definition of the 1915 events in the statement released by the ADL as 'genocide' is both historically and legally baseless." The MFA added that the Jewish community in Turkey was a part of Turkish society. "We consider this statement, which is also unjust against the memory of victims of the Holocaust, unfortunate. We expect the ADL to correct their mistake," the MFA stressed.

Mainstream Sabah believes the change in the stance of Jewish groups was due to Turkey's rapprochement with Hamas and Iran, predicting

that efforts to pass an Armenian genocide resolution by the US congress will intensify. Mainstream Milliyet warns that the shift in the ADL position might influence other Jewish groups in the US, leading to a further isolation of Turkey. The paper also reports Ankara has asked Israel to intervene in the crisis. Islamist-oriented Zaman reports Israeli President Shimon Peres will phone Erdogan today to discuss the matter, and other papers say Ankara will ask Israel to press the ADL to reverse its decision. The Israeli Embassy in Ankara released a statement announcing there was no change in its position. Israeli Ambassador Pinhas Avivi will discuss the issue with Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul during a farewell call on the FM today, say papers.

Editorial Commentary on ADL Shift Regarding Armenian Genocide
Semih Idiz writes in the mainstream daily Milliyet: "Turkey has so far enjoyed the support of the Jewish lobby in the prevention of the approval of an Armenian genocide resolution in the US Congress. This support mainly was a result of the strength of Turkish-American as well as Turkish-Israeli relations. Things started to change following the Iraq occupation and Israel-Palestine conflict, when anti-American and anti-Israeli feelings peaked. Jewish organizations in the US have started wondering why they should be helping out Turks when Turks hate them. The recent decision by the ADL is not something that happened overnight. The world system works on the basis of reciprocity and Jews do not have reason enough to support Turkey anymore. Even though the ADL noted it remained opposed to an Armenian genocide resolution in the Congress, the fact of the matter is that the Congress will certainly make note of the ADL's recognition of genocide. This development is a serious loss for Turkey."

Iraqi Vice-President Hashimi Comes to Turkey
Sabah, Zaman: PM Erdogan invited Iraqi First Deputy President Sunni

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leader Tariq Al-Hashimi to Ankara to try to help solve the government crisis in Iraq. Mainstream Sabah reports that Erdogan sent the Prime Ministry's plane to Iraq for Hashimi today and will host a dinner in honor of Hashimi tonight. Islamist oriented Zaman reports that Shiite Vice-President Adil Abdul-Mahdi is also planning to visit Turkey soon.

Editorial Commentary on Iraq
Kubilay Celik writes in the tabloid-nationalist daily Tercuman: "The US is searching to find a way out of the Iraqi quagmire. US presidents are traditionally labeled lame ducks during their last year in office. Given President Bush's situation vis-`-vis the Iraq war, I think he should be called a 'lost duck.' Under growing pressure from the American public and the Democrats, the Washington administration is now seriously talking about withdrawal. Given the presence of 160,000 soldiers, there are two likely options, just as discussed by Democratic Party candidates recently: pulling forces out through the south which means through Kuwait, or through the north which means Turkey. Such debates give a clear indication that sooner or later a pull-out plan from Iraq will be implemented. When things get serious, Washington will knock on the door for sure. Turkey has to be prepared for such a development."

US Gives Green Light to Greek Cypriot Oil Exploration

Cumhuriyet, Milliyet report that the US State Department has extended support to the Greek Cypriot Government by saying the Greek Cypriot Government, as a 'sovereign nation,' has the right to request bids for oil and natural gas exploration within its own economic zone. The US State Department confirmed that one US firm was among the bidders and stated that the involvement of US firms in such investment is a business decision. Papers quote a State Department official saying that 'Washington is not a party to the dispute between Greek Cypriots and Turkey. The controversy, however, points to the need for all parties to focus on restarting the UN's Good Office's Mission to forge a comprehensive Cyprus settlement that reunifies the island in a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation.'

DTP Will Redefine the Kurdish Problem

Yeni Safak reports that at its party convention on October 28, DTP is going to "redefine the Kurdish problem." The commission that

includes DTP Vice Chairmen Nurettin Demirtas, Selma Irmak and Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir is conducting preparatory work for the convention. The board members will work on a proposal to define the Kurdish problem and suggest approaches to solutions to be raised in the parliament.

TV Highlights
NTV

Domestic News

- Opposition CHP is to file a motion for parliamentary inquiry in connection with the words of Prime Minister Erdogan, referring to Hurriyet columnist Bekir Coskun, that those who do not accept Abdullah Gul as their next president should renounce their citizenship and leave the country. Turkish newspapers, NGOs and opposition parties described as "undemocratic" Erdogan's attack on Coskun. The Prime Minister's office said PM Erdogan's words were not directed against a single individual, claiming the controversy about Bekir Coskun was triggered by Hurriyet daily.

- The Turkish Foreign Ministry has asked Turkish workers living abroad to file suits against the new German immigration law.

- A survey conducted by the Turkish Central Bank predicts the year-end inflation to stand around 7.16 percent.

International News

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- Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, on a visit to Syria, rejected US criticism of his government and said only the Iraqi people could decide its fate.

- Greek Cypriot leader Papadopoulos blamed the Turkish side for the deadlock in Cyprus, saying he will insist on a federal settlement in the divided island.

- President Putin plans to revive Russia's military power and restore its role as the world's leading producer of military aircraft.

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